



**FOOD &  
FRIENDS®**

*Delivering hope, one meal at a time®*

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January 31, 2020

Postal Regulatory Commission  
New York Avenue NW, Suite 200  
Washington, DC 202684001

POSTAL REGULATORY  
COMMISSION  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

RE: Docket Number: RM2017-3

Dear Commissioners:

I am writing on behalf of Food & Friends and 3,800 neighbors battling serious illnesses in the Washington, D.C. metro area that Food & Friends serves annually in response to your proposal as a part of the Ten-Year Rate Review process to remove the Consumer Price Index (CPI) cap that now governs postage rates. The new formula proposed represent potential volatile postage price hikes that range from 28% - 40% or more over the next five years. We strenuously oppose this action, strongly urge you to reconsider this decision and want to tell you why.

Food & Friends prepares and delivers nutritionally tailored meals and groceries to thousands of people battling HIV/AIDS, cancer and other serious illnesses throughout the Washington, D.C. metro area. We have a \$10.9 million operating budget, half of which is supported by philanthropy.

As a nonprofit mailer, direct mail is a critical component of our fundraising program and represents 18% of the \$5.2 million in funds raised — or nearly one million dollars through direct mail across our various fundraising programs. We solicit 10,500 of our donors 10 times a year, in addition to three prospecting mailings to more than 100,000 households each time. With a national trend of declining donors, direct mail and prospecting are critical to addressing donor attrition and building our major and planned giving donor programs. Of the more than one million in revenue Food & Friends has received from 18 planned gifts in the last 10 years, 70% of those donors made their first gift through direct mail prospecting and nearly all continued to support the organization through direct mail before making a significant bequest.

**Funds raised through direct mail and prospecting provide key funding to prepare and deliver 1,054,800 healthy, medically tailored meals to 3,800 adults and children living in the Washington, D.C. metro area.**

If the CPI capped rate making system were to change to the new proposed system the USPS is contemplating, the consequence our constituents will ultimately bear is tangible. With the increased cost of postage, we would see a decrease in net revenue by roughly \$33,000 which would reduce the number of meals prepared and delivered by 3,300 to homebound seriously ill individuals.